

# OPINIONS

## Catholic Courier

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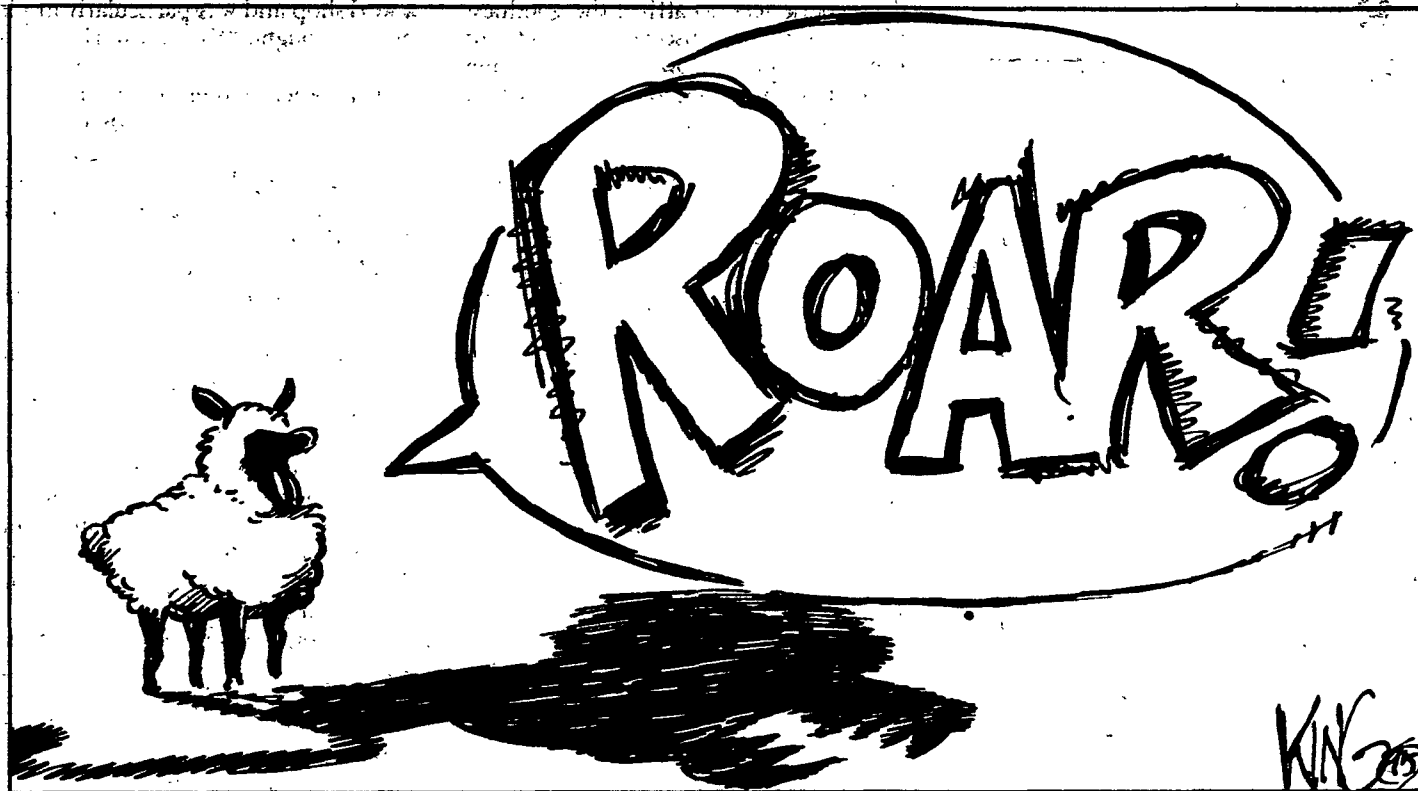
## Letters Policy

The Catholic Courier wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome original, signed letters about current issues affecting church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the church. We will choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the letter writers' opinions.

We reserve the right to edit all letters for length as well as legal concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable.

Mail letters to: Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for verification purposes.



## We should not decide infallibility

### To the editors:

I'm sure that Father Hart put a great deal of thought into the article he included in his December 17th parish bulletin in which he disagreed with Cardinal Ratzinger's response that the Church's teaching, namely, that it has no authority to ordain women, is infallible. Nevertheless, I think it is Father Hart who was in error, not Cardinal Ratzinger.

Cardinal Ratzinger stated that the church has no authority to ordain women, "not because the Pope had declared it so in a solemn act of teaching, but because the dispersed bishops had already done so by teaching it definitively in the diocese." Father Hart challenges the Cardinal's statement because he's convinced that all the bishops had not been consulted about what they teach definitively in their particular churches.

When Cardinal Ratzinger spoke of the "dispersed bishops ... teaching it definitively in their dioceses," I think he had more than our present day bishops in mind. I believe he was looking at the whole 2000 year practice of bishops, beginning with the Apostles themselves.

How do you "consult" with all the bishops who lived these past 2000 years? One way is by simply looking at what they did. Their actions speak louder than any words. Their actions follow their convictions. They ordained only men; they refused to allow women to be ordained. That 2000 year old practice in itself is a loud and clear statement about what they taught definitively in their particular churches.

Father Hart also stated that for the Church to recognize something as being infallibly taught by the bishops there should be a constant and universal consensus of Catholic theologians that a particular teaching has been and is taught everywhere definitively. I think an argument can be made that there has been a constant and universal consensus among theologians that only men can be ordained to the priesthood. That consensus is found in the theologians' centuries-long, silent acceptance of this practice. Their silence implies consent.

Finally, Father Hart states that the body of the faithful must wholeheartedly adhere to a teaching before it is recognized as infallibly taught by the ordinary

and universal magisterium. In this particular matter, i.e., ordaining only men to the priesthood, we have had almost 2000 years of adherence by the body of the faithful. The faithful's wholehearted adherence to an infallibly taught doctrine is what we hope to find — that's why they're called "faithful." But that doesn't mean that the lack of their wholehearted adherence shows the teaching is not infallible — that's why they become heretics.

Our Catholic people, Father Hart and myself included, are not to be the deciders of what is to be accepted as infallibly true; we are to be believers. We are not the teachers; we are the taught. Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Mysterium Ecclesiae* said it clearly: "No matter how much the sacred magisterium avails itself of the contemplation, life, and study of the faithful, its office (the magisterium) is not reduced merely to ratifying the assent already expressed by the latter (the faithful). Indeed, in the interpretation and explanation of the written or transmitted word of God, the magisterium can anticipate or demand their assent."

Rev. William J. Cosgrove  
St. Dominic Church

## Group provides education in memory of DWI victims

### To the editors:

I never met Carrie O'Meara, a 19-year-old woman who was killed when a driver drove his truck head-on into her car. It happened on March 4, in Charlotte. As a member of the Wayne County MADD Community Action Team I feel I must speak out at the injustice of the situation. The driver Mr. Brian Congelosi was charged with DWI for the fourth time. How could this man have been able to operate a motor vehicle? Why wasn't he in jail for his previous crimes. Yes, driving while intoxicated is a crime. Why did he survive and Carrie have to die? She will never be able to enjoy a warm sunny summer day again.

Carrie will miss out on her graduation from college, and her wedding day.

Part of the mission of MADD is to educate the public about the dangers of drinking and driving. We hope to prevent another tragedy like the one that killed Carrie. We offer victim assistance for the friends and families of the surviving victims. All our efforts are in memory of the victims like Carrie. We want to stop the people like Mr. Congelosi who choose to drink and drive. Please stop and take a moment to say a prayer for Carrie, may she rest in peace.

Timothy Bilak  
Walworth

## Latin classes pay off, student notes

### To the editors:

Last week's *Courier* (March 7 issue) had a short letter titled "Where Will It End?" by James Myers. It ended with the quotation "O Tempus, O Mores." The quotation is from Marcus Tullius Cicero's address to Cataline and reads, "O Tempus, O Mores!"

I think the times then were lamentable even as the present times are.

Latin was a favorite study in my high school and some of it stayed with me for 60 years.

Louis K. Aman  
Hollywood Blvd., Webster

## Don't assume

### To the editors:

I have never met Father Emo. I am, however, disturbed by the assumption of his guilt after he pleaded innocent. I am sad that priests who should be supporting him have implied that he has committed the acts he has been accused of.

I have worked in the nursing field and I have a credibility problem with the testimony of a physically and possibly mentally handicapped person.

I also know (some mothers will hate me for this) children can often stretch the truth a little, because they enjoy the attention they get.

And when people say something happened 20 or 30 years ago, I do not believe anyone can remember things accurately after all that time.

I would like to remind you that Jesus was judged on false evidence. He was crucified because of it. I feel that at least some of our priests are being crucified in the same way.

I know I am in the minority, but I will not believe Father Emo guilty unless he tells me so, himself. And then, if he repented, he would be forgiven.

Lillian Adams  
Bloomfield